A Comfortable Treatiſe, for the reliefe of ſuch as are afflicted in conſcience.

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Peruſed the ſecond time and enlarged in diuers places, but eſpecially with many profitable and comfortable notes in the margent.

By R. Linaker.

LVKE. 6. 21.

Bleſſed are you that weepe nowe, for you ſhall laugh.

IAMES. 1, 2, 3.

My brethren, count it exceeding ioy, when yee fall into diuers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith bringeth forth patience.

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15-419

A short viewe of those things which be handled in the Treatise following, wherein these two things be contained.

FIrst an exhortation to comfort such as are troubled in mind, from the manner of theyr affliction.

Secondly, there be seauen seuerall obiections of such as are afflicted in conscience, with their seuerall answers.

The sum of euery obiection.

THe first obiection is concerning the assurance of Gods fauour, whereof the afflicted conscience very much doubteth.

The second confesseth Christ Iesus to be a perfect Sauiour: but the troubled mind can not thus beleeue, that he is my Sauiour.

The third cõplaineth of weakenes of faith.

The fourth, of dulnesse in prayer.

The fift, that the soule distressed can not leaue sinne.

The sixt, lamenteth hardnes of hart, and little profiting by the word of God preached.

The seuenth and last, cries out against euil thoughts which arise in the mind.

A Comfortable Treatiſe for the reliefe of ſuch as are afflicted in conſcience.

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IT is not long ſince I pro-miſed you ſome ſinal remē-brance of my hartie deſire to affoord you ſome cōfort, concerning the inwarde af-fliction of your minde, if the Lord ſhould any way enable mee there vnto. I haue now therefore (according to the meaſure of grace receiued) performed ẏ promiſe, as you ſhall vnderſtand by reading theſe leaues following.

Whereby if you ſhall reape ſo much comfort, as from the depth of my hart, I entreat the Lord you may, I ſhal account my ſelfe for euer moſt neerelie bounde by all maner of dutie, and thankfulneſſe vnto his bleſſed maieſtie. Howſoeuer it fal out, you ſhall receiue and keep this poore trea-tiſe by you, as an vndoubted record of my good meaning towards you, and ſome o-thers, of whoſe particuler eſtate I haue

ſome certaine knowledge, and for whom I pray moſt hartilie, as I dw for you.

Inward afflictions are neither cõmon nor eaſie.

I confeſſe your affliction is neither cõmon nor eaſie to be borne. And that becauſe it is not outward, but inwarde, not of the bodie but of the mind. For as Salomon ſaith, A ſorrowfull minde dryeth the bones. Prou. 17, 22. Againe, A man will ſuſtaine his infirmitie, but a wounded ſpirit who can beare it? Prou. 18. 14. His meaning is, that no outward griefe or diſcommoditie whatſoeuer, but may be indured, & borne with great patience and conſtancie, but if the conſcience bee wounded, and ſtriken with the feeling of Gods wrath for ſinne, or any other great cauſe, there is neither man nor woman which is able to endure, and beare it out long, without great and gracious aſſiſtance from God.

That this is ſo, you can ſpeake of your owne experience, yet for your comfort, remember that you are not alone, the due conſideration whereof may not a little cheere vp your heart. For you reade of ſome in the ſcriptures, ſome you heare of, and ſome you know your ſelf, who grone vnder the ſame burden, whoſe conſciences are ſet verie hard vpon the racke, & whoſe

poore soules are in little ease, as well as yours.

This is one principall point, which I would haue you thinke vpon continuallie, but then especiallie, when Sathan would beare you down, that you are alone in this kinde of affliction, and that no bodie is so troubled as you are. For this purpose you may remember that sweet sentence of the holie Apostle, wherein he doth you to vnderstand, that the same afflictions which you endure, are also accomplished & suffered of your other Bretheren which are abroade in the worlde; as if he should say, Let not such a thought as this is ouersway you, that you should think you haue no fellowes. For there bee a number of GODS deere Children, who are as much and as often troubled with the same griefe of minde as well as you. For as there is no man so wise, so strong, or so rich, but there be many as wise, as strong, and as wealthy: so there is none so greatlie grieued in bodie or minde, but there be many who are as deepe in the same griefe as they be.

A principall comfort for the troubled minde.

1, Pet, 5, 9.

The be affected are your partners.

Againe, if your wily enemy shal by this kinde of temptation assay to wound your weak cõscience, ỳ you belong not to God, because

Another chiefe comfort against Sathans tẽptation.

because the correction is so sharpe, and the rod where with you are beaten so smarting, you may boldly steppe to him, wring his weapon out of his hande, and therewith thrust him thorowe: for the manner of your chastisement dooth proove verie stronglie to your conscience, that you are highlie in Gods favour, and that because you are not onely partaker of that correction whereof al the sonnes and daughters of God are partakers (for so many as are without correction are bastards, and not chyldren) but of that kind of chastisement which onlie is proper to those, who aboue manie others haue been in greater favour with GOD.

Hebr. 12,8,

Dauid was greatly loued of God, & grieuouslie afflicted.

As for example, Dauid was a man (as you haue learned from the scriptures) according to Gods owne hart, that is, such a one as the Lorde set great store by, hee notwithstanding, was throughlie whipt with this three stringed whippe, as you may reade at large, not in one, but in manie Psalmes, by name, the first Psalme throughout, a great part of the two and twentieth, and the eight and thirtieth the whole Psalme, the one and fiftie, and manie moe, which you may finde by diligent reading in ý booke of the psalmes, where you

you shall vnderstand, that his estate is all one with yours.

Againe, you may remember that Paule the Apostle was a chosen vessell, whome GOD had separated from his mothers wombe; and therewithall you cannot be ignorant, how sharplie hee was handled, when the messenger of Sathan was sent to boxe and buffet him verie sore, and that for a long season: so þ although he praied often and earnestlie, yet could hee not be deliuered. This onelie he receiued as an answere from the Lorde, that his grace should bee sufficient to vnderproppe and stay him in his greatest temptation, for my power (saith he) is made perfect thorow weakenesse. In this resolution he rested himselfe as well contented, vntil such time as the Lord should grant him full release.

Acts, 9, 15. Galat. 1, 15. Paule a chosen vessell sharply handled.

2. Cor. 12, 7, 8, 9.

Passe not by this example without some good meditation.

These are choise examples of choise persons, and not many such to be found in the whole bodie of þ Scripture: that you may cõsider how great a priuiledge of fauour God hath vouchsafed vpon you, to make you equal with his deerest children, and that in such afflictions, as for their suffering of them, they are aboue many thousands most renowned. But why stand I vpon these examples, whẽ as Iesus christ himselfe

Trouble of mind a great priuilidge of Gods fauor.

Math 3.17. The sonne of god most troubled.

himselfe (beeing the Sonne and heyre in whom onelie the Father is moſt highlie well pleaſed) was not onelie in meaſure and mercie thus chaſtiſed as you are, but as wee ſaie commonlie, beaten without mercie, yea, hee was turned and beaten, ſo as through the exceeding great anguiſh of his ſoule, hee ſweat ſuch a ſweate in the garden, as neuer man ſweat the like, that is, drops like droppes of blode, trickling, downe to the ground.

Luk, 22,44,

Your affliction is but a flea-byting to ỹ which your Saujor hath ſuffered for your ſake, that you might haue eaſe.

Yea further, beeing brought and hanged vppon the Croſſe (beſide all the villanie offered and done to him by the malitious cruell Iewes) his own father handled him ſo extremelie, not like a father, but as a moſt iuſt iudge, that he could not anie longer bite in his griefe, but in great bitterneſſe he breakes out into theſe wordes ſauouring of deepe deſpaire, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Theſe words, I ſay, ſauor ſtronglie of deſpaire, becauſe he cries out that God had forſaken him; yet was he farre from deſpaire, becauſe in the greateſt conflict with Hell and ſathan, his whole truſt was in God, and therefore with great confidence, not once, but againe hee doubleth his ſpeech, ſaying, My God, my God. Thus you haue

Math,27,46

haue not onelie manie of the faithfull, but the Sonne of God, (clad in your nature) more then a partner with you in your sufferings: which I haue alleadged to this end, that you may know that as all things worke for the best, to those that loue GOD, euen to them that are called of purpose; so this affliction of yours, which because it is so sharp, shal therefore worke your good a great deale the rather. For, experience teacheth, that that purgation which for ẏ time doth worke most strongly, and putteth the patient to the greatest paine, doth in the end bring the most ease to him who hath receiued it.

Rom,8,28

The sharpest afflictions worke the sweetest comfort.

But it may bee you will take exception against this last example of Christ Iesus, and saie that hee was not so tormented for his owne, but for your sinne, because he was without sinne. Therein you speake most trulie, for the Apostle saith, Hee was deliuered to death for our sinnes, as if hee shoulde saie, whatsoeuer griefe or torment hee endured liuing or dying, hee endured it for our sakes, that the whole fruite and comfort thereof might redound to vs. And to this agreeth that which is written in ẏ first Epistle of Peter, VVho his owne selfe bare our sins

One exception.

Heb,4,15. 1,Ioh,2,1,2

Rom,4,25

1,Pet,2,24,

in

in his bodie on the Tree, that wee beeing deliuered from sinne, shoulde liue in righteousnesse, by whose stripes wee are healed.

Christ hath suffered the torments of hell, that we might not suffer them, yea that you may neuer suffer them.

From henceforth therefore may you reape no small comfort, for the peace of your conscience in the greatest heate of temptations. For in as much as he suffered not for his owne, but for your sinne, you may be therefore wel assured that you shall neuer taste of those hellish torments which your sinnes haue deserued, and that because your Suretie, your Mediatour, your Sauiour Iesus Christ hath in your nature, but in his owne person (euen to the vttermost of Gods iustice) suffered them for you, that you might neuer suffer them, but be fullie and for euer discharged, both in this world, and in the world to come. For as the Apostle witnesseth. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Iesus.

Rom. 8, 1,

Another exception.

To bee in Christ Iesus is true happines to him or her which

Heere againe I knowe well you will thus replie, that you will graut, there is no condemnation to thē that are in Christ Iesus, that must needes be true. But all the doubt lies in this, whether you your selfe bee in Christ Iesus or not. For of that cannot you bee perswaded. If you could

uld be assured thereof, then you would not doubt, but you were without all danger of condemnation. But this is one point which doth work no final trouble in your conscience. Goe to then, let this be the chiefe point to deale with you in. is assured thereof.

And first to begin withal, let me ask you this one question: and I do not only pray, but on Gods behalfe for his glorie, & the good of your soul, I charge you to answer me plainly & truly. Had you euer any assurance of saluation in all your life? were you euer perswaded by the preaching of the Word to be saued by the death of Iesus Christ? did you euer feele the power of true repentance in your soule by these markes, that you were more grieued and sorrie at the hart for your sinnes, then for anie thing in the whole world? Did you and doe you beare a deadlie hatred against them, as against the deuill himselfe? did you, and do you purpose to the vttermost of your power, to forbeare and forsweare the practise of them all, and to walk in holines & righteousnes all the daies of your life? did that word which you haue heard so long, so soundlie, and so powerfullie preached to your conscience, which you read so diligentlie, wherein you meditate and

A great charge

Once assured and euer assured of saluation.

An vnfained sorrow for sin, a deadly hatred, a sound purpose of amendment, are the true markes of Gods child.

2. Cor, 7, 9, 10, 11.

Luke, 7, 15,

Answer euery article truly at your perill.

Psalm, 1, 2, Phil, 3, 8,

and take so great delight, as that you coũt all worldlie thinges but dunge in compa-rison thereof?

Did that Word (I saie) neuer speake peaceablie to your conscience by the holie ministerie? Did it neuer giue you assu-rance and ioy in the holie Ghost? Did it neuer worke such sweete comfort, as no worldlie ioy coulde be like vnto it? Did you neuer heare such a sermon from your owne godlie and carefull Pastor, or from anie other, that you haue said at your cō-ming home, you woulde not for all the worlds good but you had heard it, because it was so sweet & comfortable? Did you neuer speake that word, from the true fee-ling of the heart, which might warrant your soule that you are in Christ Jesus? If this Worde hath had this gracious and powerfull worke in your soule (as I am fullie perswaded it hath, and your selfe cannot denie it: For if you doe, be-side the great wrong you offer your owne soule, you trespasse against that Spirit, whereby you haue beene sealed vnto the day of redemption) then know assuredlie, you are so grafted into the bodie of Christ Jesus, as nothing shal be able to seperate you from that loue which the Lorde your God beareth you in his deere Sonne, in whom

Ephe. 4. 30.

Gods loue is euerlasting & vnchang-able.

whome hee hath so loued you once, as hée must needes loue you for euer. And that because the Euangelist saith, VVhom he loues, hee loues to the end. For the gyfts and calling of GOD are without repentance. Iohn.13.1. Rom.11.29

Againe, GOD is not as man, that hee shoulde lie, neither as the sonne of man that hee shoulde repent. Hath hee saide, and shall he not do it? and hath hee spoken it, and shall hee not accomplish it? Num.23.19

No, be you well assured, and write vpon it, that the strength of Israell will not lie nor repent. For as the apostle James saith, with him there is no variablenesse, nor shadowing by turning. Let these, and such like places, bee alwaies in your remembrance, & giue your selfe vnto the continuall meditation thereof. For they shall stand you in great stead, if you can call them to minde, when your temptations shal assaile you with greatest strēgth. And forget not, often to thinke of such excellent places as that is, which you find written in the eight chapter of the Epistle written to the Romanes, and the sixe and thirtieth verse, after this manner, VVhat shall separat vs from the loue of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecu- 1.Sa.15.29. Iam.1.17. Therefore read thē often & continually, that you may alwayes haue thé at your fingers end.

tion, or famine, or nakedneſſe, or perill, or ſword, &c.

No, I am perſwaded, that neither death nor life, angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor thinges preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate vs from the loue of GOD which is in Ieſus Chriſt our Lord.

And ful ſweet to this purpoſe are thoſe wordes of the holy Prophet Dauid. The Lord is neere vnto them that are of a cō-trite hart, and will ſaue ſuch as bee afflicted in ſpirit. Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lorde deliuereth him out of them all. Againe, weeping may abide at euening, but ioy commeth in the morning. But you finde no ſuch matter you ſay, for this trouble of minde hath holden you, not onely nights and dayes, but wækes and moneths, yea and yéeres, and yet you can finde no eaſe nor comfort. Be it ſo, yet bee not therefore out of hart, for the longer it bee before you haue eaſe, the more welcome it ſhal be when it commeth.

Pſalm. 34. 18, 19.

Pſal. 30. 5.

And to this purpoſe are the wordes of the Wiſe-man where he ſaith, The hope that is deferred, is the fainting of the hart, but when the deſire commeth, it is a tree

of life. Laſtlie, let the words of Eliphas the Temanite be faſt bounde vnto your ſoule, which you ſhall finde thus reported in the Booke of Iob, the fift chapter, the 17. 18, 19. verſes.

Beholde, (ſaith hee) bleſſed is the man whom GOD correcteth; therefore refuſe not thou the correction of the Almightie. For hee maketh the wounde and bindeth it vp; hee ſmiteth, and his handes make whole. Hee ſhall deliuer thee in ſixe troubles, and in the ſeauenth the euill ſhall not touch thee.

The ſumme and drift of all that which hath beene ſet downe from the beginning to this preſent place, is to encourage you concerning the manner of your affliction, which though it be verie ſharpe and bitter to the fleſhe, becauſe no chaſtiſement for the preſent ſeemeth to bee ioyous but greeuous; yet there is a tyme, vvhen it ſhall bring the quiet fruite of righteouſneſſe vnto them that are thereby exerciſed: Hebr. 12. 11. A principall comfort for the afflicted ſoule.

In regard heereof, Moſes the man of God ſaith, that the Lord hũbled his owne choſen people and prooued them, that hee might doo them good at theyr latter ende. And truelie, in my poore iudge- Deut. 8, 16

ment, you may gather more vndoubted assurance of Gods euerlasting fauour towardes your soule by these inwarde afflictions, then by any outward prosperitie of any worldly blessing what-soeuer, whether it be of health, of riches, or such like.

Afflictions better tokés of gods loue then riches & prosperity

And that because in these your afflictions you are most like vnto your head Iesus Christ, who though he were the right Sonne and heyre of the whole world, yet had hee not a house to hide his heade in. (as himselfe confesseth.) But it pleased the Father (seeing hee would bring many chyldren vnto glorie) to consecrate the Prince of their saluation through afflictions.

Heb, 1, 2,
Math, 8, 20,
Heb, 2, 10,

Nowe, as the holie Apostle reasoneth. This is a true saying, if wee be dead with him, wee shall also liue with him. If wee suffer with him, wee shall also reigne with him. To be short, the holie Ghost sayth, That wee must by many afflictions enter into the kingdome of GOD. And once againe, Those whom he knewe before, hee also predestinated to bee made like vnto the Image of his Sonne, that he might bee the first-borne among many brethren. So that you may well perceiue you are not thus farre forth, any whit ou-

2. Tim, 2, 11, 12.
Acts, 14, 22
Rom, 8, 28.

of your way, but you keepe the rode, e- Afflictions the highway to heauen.
uen the good way which leadeth you as streight as a lyne vnto the Kingdome of heauen.

And therefore as no traueller, who keepes his right way and knowes it, will be sorrie, but very glad, because hee trauelleth to come to that place, where his desire is to abide: so no more cause haue you to be grieued, but rather to reioyce, because you know you walke in the streight path, which shal bring you to that place of your abode, where you would so faine be, and where you shal abide most blessed and happie for euer. Thus much haue I thought good to offer vnto your godlie meditations, to encourage you cõcerning the manner of your afflictions. The Lord grant you a rich portion of his spirit, that your soule may reape a gratious blessing.

Nowe you shall further vnderstand in few wordes, what shall be the substance of all the matter which foloweth in the remainder of this poore treatise. I purpose so neere as I can, to gather together those obiections which you and others do obiect against your selues: and so farre as the Lord shall affoord me his grace, I entend in order to answere them. The substance of the whole treatise folowing.

The firſt obiection and aunſwere.

The troubled minde doubts of Gods fauor.

The firſt and principall obiection (ſo fa
as I can conceiue & learne by conferenc
with you, and with ſo manie as I haue a
nie acquaintance) is this, That you doub
much of Gods fauour towards you, tha
you feare it greatlie you are not the childe
of God, and if you be, yet cannot you b
thereof certainly perſwaded. This obiec
tion hath alreadie been anſwered in part;
notwithſtanding, becauſe it is as ỳ foun
dation of all the other obiections, I wil
hope of Gods gracious aſſiſtance indeu
my ſelfe to anſwere it more fully, for you
better contentment.

A needfull point, therfore marke it well,

Firſt therefore I would gladlie learn
this one thing of you, or of anie othe
(who is your partner in theſe temptat
ons) who it is that beareth you ſo grea
lie in hande, you are not the Childe o
God.

Hearken to Gods ſpirit for he ſeekes your good.

If you aunſwere, your conſcience
through the greatneſſe of your ſinne dot
tel you ſo: then do I againe demaund
you, who it is that ſets your conſcience
worke to vrge this point & to what end. I
it be Gods ſpirit, you may be right glad
becauſe then it is for your good, namelie
that you may goe out of your ſelfe, an
ſeeke the forgiueneſſe of your ſinnes a
euerlaſting ſalnation in Chriſt his dea
an

and obedience, to the full assurance of Gods fauour, and the euerlasting peace of your conscience.

But speake the truth, is it not rather a strong temptation of Sathan your deadlie enemie to trouble the peace of your conscience, and if it be possible, to driue you to desperation? If it bee so, (as I feare it greatlie,) then saie I vnto you, there is no cause why you should beléeue him.

Harken not to Sathan, for hee hath vowed your destruction.

First, because he is a lyer. Secondlie, because he is your enemie, who meanes you no good at all. That he is a lyar it is manifest, because hee hath beene so from the beginning, And hee cannot nowe change his nature. It is as much against his nature to speake the truth, as it is possible that God shoulde lie, who is onelie and euer true. Therefore there is no cause why you should beléeue such a common liar as the deuill, who will lie as fast as a Dogge can trot, as wee vse to say in our common speech. You haue iust cause therefore to except against him in this respect. Againe, you needs not doubt that hee is your enemie, and that to the death: Because he is the common accuser of the Bretheren, and like a roaring Lyon goeth about continually seeking

Iohn.8.44.

Heb 6.18.
Rom.3.4.

Reue.12.10
1,Pet,5,8,

No credit to be giuen to the deuill though hee speake truth, because his meaning is badde.

king whom he may deuoure. In regarde whereof you are not to hearken to him, or beleeue anie thing hee shall say vnto you, no although hee speake the truth. And my reason is, because hee will not tell you the truth, to helpe, but to hinder you, not to cheere, but to choake you, not to saue, but to spill your blood. And whereas you will reply, you cannot denie, but hee sayth the trueth concerning the greatnesse of your sinnes, and the iust condemnation which you haue deserued for them. I answere thereto after this manner. That you are not to take the knowledge of your sinnes from Sathan, because he will not tel you the truth, and the whole truth as it is in deede.

Marke the deuils cunning.

The holy vse of the Ministery. Rom, 7, 7.

Regard and reuerēce the ministery if you loue your soule.

For eyther hee will pare your sinnes, and make them lesse thē they be, to make you altogether carelesse, or else hee will make them greater then they be, to throw you headlong into dispaire. But you are to take the perfit knowledge of your sins, from the true vnderstanding of the Lawe of God, fast girded to your conscience, by the holie Ministerie, which GOD hath ordained for this purpose, that you may thereby come to true and vnfained repentaunce of all your sinnes, and be

saued

ued through fayth in Christ his blood. For the blood of Christ doth cleanse you from all sinne. 1, Iohn, 1, 7.

And if you will yet reason against your selfe, that your sinnes are so great, that you can gather no assurance of Gods fauour towards you: then let mee offer to your cōsideration some one or two examples of such notorious knowne sinners, as the world cried shame of, and yet repenting had theyr sinnes forgiuen them. I meane of set purpose to make choise of those persons and people, who in the scriptures are noted to be most infamous. Because you and such as are so exercised as you are, doe indeed charge your selues further than you ought. For you make your selues so bad, as though none were to be compared vnto you, or as though God had no mercie in store for you. And heereupon it comes to passe, that almost there is not any worde of God which can bring peace vnto your troubled consciences.

Examples of notorious sinners who repented & were pardoned.

No easie matter to comfort a troubled minde.

I intende therefore to match you so, and with such, as you shall bee forced to cōfesse you are outmatched. The end shal be this, to bring glad tidings to your heauie and sorrowfull soule, that God both is and will be more fauourable to you, then

you

Reasons to perswade the afflicted.

The Lord perswade your hart.

you can as yet be perswaded. For if God haue shewed mercie to those, who by reason of their knowne sins, were in al mens iudgement further from mercie: how can he denie you mercie, who neuer brake in to that outrage of sinne, and yet do most humblie sue vnto him for mercie.

That good Maister, who forgaue his badde seruaunt at his owne intreatie, ten thousand tallents, would not haue beene harde vnto him who ought but a hundred pence, if hee had sued vnto him, as he did to his cruell and vnmercifull fellowe seruaunt, who by no meanes woulde be intreated, to shewe that fauour in a little debt, which was shewed him in a verie great summe.

Remember, I praie you, that you haue to deale with a God, who is farre more mercifull: and therefore you maie be sure to finde more fauour. You reade in the Gospell of S. Luke the seauenth Chapter, from the thirtie and sixt verse vnto the end of the Chapter, of Marie Magdalen, and of her behauiour, being a woman not onelie vehementlie suspected of lewd life, but openlie knowne for a common harlot, and generallie so taken, as may appeare by the words of Simon the pharisie, who

Marie Magdalen a notorious and known sinner.

receiu-

ceiuing Iesus Christ into his house, thought neuer a deale the better, but much the worse of him, because he suffered so bad a woman to come so neere him, but especiallie to laie anie hand vpon him, as to wash his feete with her teares, and to wipe them with the haires of her head: to kisse his feet, and to annoint them with ointment. Luke, 7,38, 39, The hypocritical Pharisie is offended with Christ.

All this notwithstanding, marke what meruailous great mertie, Iesus Christ shewes to this so wretched and sinfull a Woman. First, hee takes in verie good part, whatsoeuer shee had done vnto him, whereas Simon loked he should not onlie haue shewed his great disliking of her dealing, but to haue shaken her vp, & that roundlie for her sawcines, to come so nere him without his loue & leaue. Secondlie, he is so farre off from misliking her behauiour in that present action, that he doth highlie commend her to Simon, and that after so speciall a manner, as he giues him to vnderstand, he takes better liking of her kindnesse, then of all the great prouision which he hath made for him: because whatsoeuer shee did, shee did it with an vpright heart towardes him, and in a sincere loue for the good of her own soule. Thirdlie for the

1 Iesus Christ likes Maries doings.

2 Christ cõmends Maries teares more then Simõs great dinner.

3 Maries sinnes forgiuen her.

the ease of her heart, which now was grieuously tormented for her wicked life past (as appeared by the abundance of teares shee powred out) hee saith to Simon in her hearing, that many sinnes were forgiuen her.

Luk, 7, 47.

4 Christ speakes particulerly to Mary for her comfort.

verse, 48, 50.

Fourthly, that shee might take better hold of his wordes, and apply them to herselfe for the comfort of her owne soule, he turnes his speech particulerly vnto her, and saith in more speciall manner, Thy sinnes are forgiuen thee, Thy faith hath saued thee.

5 Maries happy farewell. ver. 50.

Lastly, that she might depart a ioyfull and blessed woman indeede, wanting nothing which might make for the peace of her conscience, he giues her a most sweet farewell, saying, Goe in peace.

The application of the first example.

Now let mee reason a little with you, concerning this Woman, can you when you haue strained out your sinnes to the vttermost, make your selfe as bad as this woman. No, you cannot, you may not, you dare not. For how dare you slaunder your owne selfe, when it is not anie way lawful to slaunder another: and if you be bounde to tender the good name of your brother as wel as your own, then it must needes followe, you are by nature most

Applie the plaister to the sore that your soule may haue ease.

bound

ound to tender your owne. If then you annot denie, but you are by great odds utmatched in this crample, shewe mee hat sound reason you can bring to proue hy Jesus Christ should not entreat you s kindly, and shewe you as much fauour s he shewed to Marie, especiallie when s your sinnes (euen by your owne con-ssion) are neither so notorious, nor so pparant, and open in outward transgres-ons, to be seene & iudged by the worlde s hers were.

And yet for all that your teares as ma-y, your hart as much tormented with so-rowe, your kindnes as great to Christ in his members, and your desires as great o bee wholy his at his commaundement. Did hee regarde her, and will hee reiect you? Did hee not shew her a hard coun-enaunce, and will he looke sowrely vpon you? Did not shee let so much as any one eare fall in vaine? Did her teares moue him to compassion? And doe you thinke hee will not haue pittie vpon you, and put vp all your teares into his bottle?

The teares you shedde are not spilt, for the Lord hath put thē all into his bottle. Psalm. 56. 8.

Were many sinnes forgiuen her, and can any of your sins be vnpardoned? was her faith strong to saue her, and shall your faith want strength to saue you? did Christ for a farewell, bid her go in peace, and wil

he

he send you awaie emptie without peace? No verilie. If you thinke so, you thinke much amisse, and therefore such a thought must not depart without som due chastisement.

A familiar resemblāce

Suppose there is a man of so great wealth, that hee knowes no ende of his goods. And suppose that this man hath many debters, which owe him very great summes of monie. As for example, some owe him thousands, some hundreds, and some manie scores of pounds. Amongst thē all there is one poore man, who owes him twentie pounds, which he is no waie able to paie, nor anie pennie thereof, if hee shoulde be cast into prison, and lie there til he rot. If this great rich man shall cause a proclamation to be made, that all and euerie one of his debters shoulde come to him, and hee wil frankly & freelie forgiue them all although the debt were neuer so great, vpon this condition, that they will confesse and acknowledge the debt to bee due, whether it were more or lesse. If the poore man should come in among the rest of the debters, & confesse himselfe to owe him such a summe as I haue named, laie forth his powertie, and therewithall humblie vppon his knees with teares beseech him

He that forgiues a great debt, will redily forgiue a small.

m to shewe some fauour towarde him? should not he in this case haue good hope be forgiuen, especially if before his face should see one to haue thousands forgiuen for a word of his mouth.

These things concerne you very neere, and therefore I am so much the rather intreate you, not to make wash way of them, but as they do neerely concerne you and your good, so to lay them neere vnto your heart, by reuerent meditation, that your soule may find a gracious and comfortable blessing.

Labour to apply if you desire to haue cōfort.

The second example whereof I would haue you to make diligent consideration, is written in the first Chapter of the Prophet Esay, and the 18. verse, where the Lorde makes a meruailous large offer of great mercy vnto a people, who had highlie offended him, I meane the people of Israel. To these Israelites in most louing maner the Lord speaketh, Come, saith he, let vs reason together, though your sinnes were as crimson, they shall be made white as snowe, though they were red as scarlet, they shall be as wooll. What the offer is you heare, and how great it is, your selfe is able to iudge: euen so large an offer of mercie

A second example of the great rebellion of Israel.

Esai. 1. 18.

mercie as none can be greater. Jn or wordé, it is as if the Lorde should say. O Jsracll thou hast sinned against mee thy good God most grieuously, and hast deserued that J should not onely punish thee sharply, but for euer cast thee cleane out of my fauour.

Notwithstanding, vpon thine vnfayned repentance for all thy sinnes past, and a resolute and full purpose of amendment hereafter, J am contented to forgiue and forget them all, and to giue thée my gracious generall pardon, to acquite and discharge thée of all and euery one of thine iniquities, that not so much as anie one of them shall bee able to condemne thee in this worlde, or in that which is to come.

A generall pardon offered.

Here J pray you consider a little with me the estate and cõdition of this people, at the time of this louing offer, and therewith also consider, what cause there was why the lord should shew so great fauour to thys people. Begin you at the second verse of the forenamed chapter, and mark aduisedlie what manner of complaint the Lorde taketh vp against them. First hée calles heauen and earth with all the creatures therein to witnesse their rebellion and

The cursed condition of the Jsralites.

1 An appeale to all creatures of disobedicée.

and disobedience against him. Secondlie hee chalengeth them of so monstrous vnthankfulnes, that it is too too shamefull: for hee shewes they were so farre gone in this point, that the brute beasts, euen the Ore and the Asse, which were dumbe and without reason, were more thankfull in their kinde, to their owners for their fodder, then they were for so manie thousands of blessings, which hee had bestowed vpon them. 2 Vnthankfulnes.

Thirdlie, in the third verse he drawes out against them, a verie substantiall inditement both for wordes and matter, wherein hee layes forth all their ill behauiour, and paints them out in most liuelie colours, calling them with great detestation, A sinnefull Nation, a people laden vvith iniquity, a seede of the vvicked, corrupt children. Fourthlie, hee prooues this inditement, and euerie part thereof, by charging them to their faces with murder, and blood, by reason of their horrible oppression, and crueltie towards all in generall, but more speciallie towards the poore, the widdowe, the stranger and the fatherlesse, all this is done in the fifteenth and seauententh verses. In the practise of which sinnes, and all other 3 A large inditement. Esa, 1, 3. 4 A proofe of the inditement. verse, 15, 17.

kinde of filthines, they were such exquisite worke-men, that they were more like the
verse, 10. people of Sodom and Gomorrha (whom the Lorde with fire from heauen destroyed) then that people whom the Lord had
Exo. 29,5,6 chosen, and pickt out from all the nations of the worlde, to be a peculiar and a holie people vnto himselfe.

5. Fiftlie, they were such hollowe hearverse, 11,12, ted hipocrites in all the outward exerci-
13.14.15. ses of Religion, that the Lorde detested
Hipocrites in the ser- all their Sacrifices, and vtterlie abhorwice of God. red all their prayers, as you may reade in the 11. 12. 13. 14. and 15. verses.

To make an ende with so bad a people, as lightlie could not be worse, they were so desperate, and hardened in their wickednesse, that they were past cure, and no hope or verie small (if anie at all of the greater part) of their amendment, because the Lorde had assayed by all good meanes, to bring them to some godnesse. Hee had wooed them with blessings, and feared them with his iudge-
2, Sam. 7,14 ments: he had chastised them often with roddes, and manie times scourged them
verse, 5, 6. with the plagues of the children of men, but all in vaine, the more they were corrected, the worse they were, and grew

be more desperate, as appeares out of
he fift and sixt verses.

After all this bad dealing, as though
hey had beene no such lewde and grace-
lesse people, or as though they had not
ffended so greeuously, nay, rather as
ough the Lorde had doone them some
reat wrong, he seekes to them (where-
s they should haue both sued and sought
o him) that there might be a treatie of
eace, and a full reconciliation made be-
weene them. For which purpose he of-
rs in most friendlie and louing manner,
common with them, saying, Come let
s reason together.

The Lord intreates peace at their hands, which had highly offe-ded him.

verse, 18.

Nowe giue mee leaue once againe to
ale with your conscience in this point.
harge your soule with as manie sinnes
s euer you can possiblie call to minde, in
ie part of your life, either before or
nce your calling, in ignorance or in
owledge, in youth or in age, howso-
er, or with whomsoeuer you haue com-
itted them, either by thought, word, or
ed, in the light of the day, or in the dark-
s of the night. Bind them all and eue-
one of them in one bundle, cast them
to the one ende of the ballance: when
u haue so done, take vp the sinns of this

A particuler application of ỹ former example.

people, put them into the other ende, an
weigh them together without anie de
ceite.

Nay, for this once you shall hau
leaue to shewe your best cunning, and se
if you can make your ende heauier. I
you cannot (as I am sure you cannot, e
cept you will vse some notable deceite
which will be soone found out, so as yo
shall neuer bee able to aunswere it) the
knowe you, and let your conscience all
vnderstand, that if the Lord saide vnto
wicked people, frozen in sinne, come, b
dooth much more saie to you, who wou
so faine leaue your sinne, come, and
gaine come, let vs two reason togethe
For, although thy sinnes be in thine ow
sight as crimson, yet shall they be ma
as white as snowe, though they be (
thy scorning) as red as cuer was the sca
let, yet they shall bee as white as an
wooll, because they shall be all so pe
fectlie scowred and washed in the blood
Rom.8,1. Iesus Christ, as not anie one of them sh
be able to condemne thee, either in th
woorld or in the woorld to come.

A strong reason to proue and perswade.

And that you may be the more bol
to come, beholde your sweete Sauio
2,Cor.5,21. (vvho being made sinne for you that y
mig

night be made the righteouſnes of God)
th alſo vnto you, come; yea, for your
urther encouragement hee offers, and is
adie to take you by the hand, and to goe
ith you himſelfe vnto the Father, for
hoſe ſake you muſt needes bee moſt
artilie welcome. And if you ſhall thus
nſwere your Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt,
at gladlie you would come, but that
our ſinnes doe ſo clogge, and loade your
art with ſorrowe: then heare howe a-
ine hee replies vpon you, ſaying. If
e caſe ſtand ſo with thee, then come in
ie wiſe, yea therefore the rather come.
or if thy ſinnes doe put thee to paine,
d be as a heauie burthen, too bigge for
ee to beare, come thy way, and lay them
l vpon my ſhoulders, for my backe is
oade enough to beare them all, were
ey neuer ſo manie.

I am well content to beare the whole
ade of them mine owne ſelfe, that thou
apeſt bee fullie and for euer diſchar-
d. For ſuch ſinners doe I call, and
ch ſinners onelie will I ſaue, as are
paine and throughlie tired with their
nnes.

As for ſuch ſinners as haue ſtore of
nnes hanging vpon them, and either doe
t feele them, or care for no help, I haue

Math. 11,28 Another reaſon of great weight: will you not come when your Sauiour calleth you for your good.

The tired ſinner may boldly com to Chriſt.

Math. 11,28 Mark well that Chriſt will ſaue hũbled ſinners and none other.

nothing to doe with them, neither will
Mat.9,12, and 13, bee ame Sauiour vnto them. For, th
vvhole neede not the Phisition, but th
sicke. I came not to call the righteou
but sinners to repentance.

Thus farre I haue endeuoured
satisfie your first and maine obiectio
and to my power aimed at this mark
namelie, to pacifie your troubled cons
ence with this comfortable and soun
persvvasion, that being iustified by fai
Rom,5,1. you haue peace tovvarde GOD th
rough our Lorde Iesus Christ, by vvho
Ephe,3,12. you haue boldnesse and entraunce v
to GOD the Father, and that by t
powerfull vvorking of Gods Spir
vvhich is the spyrite of adoption, vvhi
Rom 9,15, 16,18. you haue receaued, vvhereby you c
Abba Father. The same spirite bear
vvitnesse vvith your spyrit, that you
the childe of GOD. And if you b
a childe, then are you also an he
of GOD, and a ioynt heyre vv
Christ.

And therefore not I, but Gods h
lie spirite in the Epistle to the Hebrew
(whose vvordes you ought both to reg
and reuerence) saieth vnto you in t
Heb.4,17. wise: Lette vs goe boldelie vnto t
thro

throne of grace, that vvee may receaue mercie, and finde grace to helpe in time of neede.

I beseech you marke aduisedlie that the Author of the Epistle calleth vppon you to goe, and to goe boldlie. But whether would hee haue you goe? forsooth to the throne. And to what throne? Not to a throne of iustice, of wrath, and condemnation, but to a throne of grace and mercie. It is indeede a throne of iustice, of wrath, and condemnation, but not to you, nor anie such as you are. The throne against your comming is couered and hanged all ouer from end to end, both wide and side with most rich and costlie cloth of grace and mercie. The hangings are all of grace, & throughout embrodered with nothing but mercie. Viewe them your selfe, looke vpon them throughlie, and you shall finde all mercie and nothing else but mercie. Therfore you are willed to come to this throne boldly, because it is a throne of grace and mercie.

Labour to cast off feare when God would haue you bold.

You are louingly called to come to a louely throne, hanged all ouer with hangings of grace and mercy.

And that you maie knowe beforehand what you shall gaine by your comming thither, you are tolde plainlie and truelie, you shall finde (that which your soule most longeth after) store of grace, and

Mercy welcomes you.

and you shall receaue so much mercie as may helpe you, when you shall stand in most nœde of mercy. Thus must it nœds be, and otherwise it cannot be, because the Iudge himselfe, who sittes vpon the throne, is a Iudge full of mercie, clad altogether with rich robes of mercie, and your great friend, who will shew you all the fauor that may be. For why, hee is Iesus your Sauiour, who will in no case suffer you to miscarie.

You must needes bee welcom, for the Iudge is your great friend.

Matth. 1, 21,

The second obiection & aunswere.

Heere is good occasion offered to aunswere a second obiection of yours, which is, that you beleeue, that Iesus Christ is a perfect and an able Sauiour, but not your Sauiour: that hee saith come, but hee saith not come to you. But I will proue hee speaketh to you as well as to anie other, and that as particularlie and as plainlie as if he should call you by your name, and say, come M. P. E. I speake vnto thee by name.

The troubled minde cannot applie Christ to it selfe.

Aduise your selfe well, that he ỹ knows you cals you

Esa, 43, 1, Feare not, for I haue redeemed

First, you will graunt, that in those wordes (which you finde thus written, in the eleuenth Chapter of S. Matthewe, and twentie eight verse. Come vnto me all you, that are wearie and laden, Christ Iesus calleth all sinners generallie, you

are

re one amongſt the reſt. Therefore hee calls you. For hee ſaith, He came to call ſinners to repentance.

thee, I haue called thee by thy name thou art mine.

Secondlie, in the fore named wordes hee calls ſuch ſinners onelie particularlie and by name as are wearie and laden with their ſinnes. Are your ſinnes pleaſant to your palat, and ſweete vnto your taſte? Dooth the remembrance of your ſinnes make you laugh, as though ye were tickled, when you thinke vpon them? Is it the ioy and pleaſure of your ſinnes, which drawes ſo great ſtore of ſalt teares from your eies, and fetcheth ſo manie deepe ſighs from your heart?

Iudge you, whither you be called.

Doe your ſinnes lie vpon your conſcience like ſome little light feather? or rather doe they not preſſe and holde you downe as a wonderfull weightie burthen? If you be in this caſe, then may you kvowe, if you will knowe that which ſhall doe you good, that hee ſpeakes to you by name, and ſaith vnto you, come boldlie and feare not, I will eaſe thée of all thoſe thy ſinnes, which are ſo great a burthen to thy conſcience, and will giue thee a gracious generall pardon in my death and paſſion. Moreouer, I will from toppe to toe couer and cloathe thee

with

with the rich robes of mine owne righteousnesse, vnto the full assurance of euerlasting life.

The 3. obiection and answere.

The third obiection followeth, that your faith is weake, and so weake, as you are fullie perswaded there is no childe of God hath so weake a faith as you haue. I perceaue it fareth with you as it dooth with one that is greatlie troubled with the toth-ache, gowte, stone, or some such strong disease, who beeing in verie great paine, in the extremitie thereof cries out, that there was neuer anie creature in the world so cruellie tormented.

The troubled mind complaines of the weakenes of faith.

And why saith hee so? forsooth because hee feeles his owne paine, and no other mans beside: therefore hee speakes of that which himselfe feeleth, and not of that which hee doth not feele. For there be as great manie moe as greatlie tormented as he: but hee thinkes not so, because he doth not feele it so.

Euery man complaines of his owne paine.

Thus doe you deale, you are greatlie troubled with the weakenes of your owne faith which you feele: therefore according to your feeling you complaine, that none hath so weake a faith as you haue: notwithstanding there be a great number besides your selfe, who are as much troubled

Many deere seruants of God are greatly greeued for the weakenes of their faith.

this

this way as you. But I will take your own words. You say your faith is weake. Yea, then you grant you haue faith. And therefore say I, or rather the Lord himselfe for your comfort, you cannot possiblie perish. For God so loued the world, that he gaue his only begotten sonne, that vvhosoeuer beleeueth in him might not perish, but haue euerlasting life. Iohn, 3, 16.

But your faith (as you saie) is so weake, that you cannot thinke it to be anie faith at all. And I againe doe answer you with a better warrant than your thought, that a weake faith is a faith, yea a good and a sound faith. The weakenes of faith doth not take away the nature and being of faith, that because there is weaknesse in it, therefore it should cease to be a faith. A weak faith is a good faith, therefore make much of it, and labour to strengthen it.

Will you say a weake man is no man, because of his weakenes? No, for he is a man though neuer so weake, as long as there is anie life and breath in him. Neither dooth his weakenesse take away his goodnes: for hee may be a verie good man although he be verie weake: So say I of your faith, the weaknes thereof takes not away the goodnes. It is a good, a sound, and a liuelie faith, although it be weake. I A weak man is a man.

neuer

Weakenes of faith, a generall cõplaint of all the godly.

neuer yet heard of anie beleeuing man or woman, but haue complained of the weakenes of their faith. May for my part I haue marked it in sundrie examples, that the more godlie and beleeuing, the more they haue complained. I coulde from mine owne experience, name diuers to proue this point, and some of them well knowne vnto your selfe. But I will name some one or two out of the Scriptures, and leaue the rest to your owne good consideration.

Mark. 9. 24. Example of a weak faith in a verie good man,

You reade in the Gospell of S. Mark the ninth chapter and foure and twentieth verse of so good and faithfull a man, as you will your selfe confesse, he had a true and sincere faith, because hee saide vnto Jesus Christ, Lord, I beleeue. Neuertheless, this good man was sicke of your disease, and felt his faith to be weake, yea verie weake, and therefore hee intreates the Lord Jesus verie earnestlie, yea crying out with teares, saith, Lord helpe my vnbeleefe, &c.

The Apostles weake in faith.

Againe, you reade in Saint Lukes Gospell, the seauenteenth chapter and fift verse, of the holie Apostles, whom our Sauiour Christ had chosen to preach, and by

by their preaching to begette faith in o-thers: yet euen these men doe in like ma-ner finde and feele great want and weake-nes in their owne faith. For which cause they put vp their humble supplication vn-to their Lord and maister Iesus Christ, that he would encrease their faith.

So that nowe you see verie plaindie, there is no cause, why you should too much discourage your selfe, with the con-sideration of the weakenes of your faith. Because the best and most faithfull ser-uants of God, doe halt of this sore as wel as you, and shall doe as long as they liue in this world. For there is no perfection of anie good grace in this life. We see and knowe in part, and therefore must néedes also beléeue and practise in part. Perfec-tion is no where to be found but in hea-uen, that we may long to be there, and so be fullie perfect.

Weakenes and wants wil wait vp-on vs to our graue.

2, Cor. 13, 9.

God vseth this as a holie and good meanes, rightlie to humble you and ma-nie of his déere children for your good, that by the true féeling of this weakenes, and manie other infirmities, you may sée how much néede you haue to runne continual-lie for strength and succour at the hands of your swéet Sauior, who hath through-lie

Weakenes of faith a spe-ciall meanes to humble vs.

lie supplied all your wants, and who will so strengthen you, that your faith (though neuer so weake to your own feeling) may neuer faile you.

For which purpose I would haue you to laie sure holde of these wordes full of sweete comfort, deliuered vnto Peter by our Sauiour Christ, for the strengthening of all the faithfull. Simon, Simon, Sathan hath desired to vvinnowe you as vvheate, but I haue prayed for thee that thy fayth faile not. Marke I praie you, howe Iesus Christ promiseth to praie for Peter, and not for him onelie, but for all the faithfull. For is he onelie Peters Sauiour? is hee not also the Sauiour of all the faithfull in the worlde? Is hee not your Sauiour as well as Peters? yes truelie. Then he will pray for you also. For so hee saith in that most sweete prayer, which hee makes to his heauenlie Father, for all the faithfull which shall beleeue in him to the worldes ende. I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall beleeue in me thorough their word.

Luke, 22, 31

All the faithfull are as deere to Christ as Peter.

Hee prayeth for all the faithfull as well as for Peter, and for you.

Iohn, 17, 20

And if hee in whom onelie the Father is wholie and altogether well pleased, and for whose sake hee can not bee displeased with you, doe praie for you, shall

Math, 3, 17.

hall not hee bee heard, and his prayer
illie graunted? Yes, it cannot be de-
ied.

But yet you saie hée speakes to Pe-
er, and promiseth to praie for him by
ame. Yea, and that is as much as if he
hould call you by your name, and saie
hat he will pray for you, and for so ma-
ie as Sathan hath anie desire to winnow.
But Sathan hath a great desire, not onelie
o winnowe Peter, but all the rest of the
aithfull also. For so are Christs words,
aying, Sathan desires to vvinnowe, not
hee, but you, as if hee should say, his
alice is not against one alone, but a-
gainst all.

Christ in Peter speaks to all the faithfull by name.

Sathans malice is deadly against all the faithfull.

Therefore as all must looke to them-
elues: so Christ promiseth to praie for
o manie as are winnowed, and particu-
arlie for you, because you can tell that
ou are winnowed. And whereas it plea-
eth the Lord thus to winnow & sift your
aith, you maie be sure not to loose, but
o gaine thereby. For this you knowe,
he more the good Corne is fanned, and
winnowed, the cleaner it is: and the oft-
ner golde is put into the fining-pot, the
more pure and excellent it is. To this end
herefore are you fined after this manner,

That

1,Pet 1,7. That the tryall of your faith being much more precious then golde that perisheth, though it be tryed vvith fire, might bee found vnto your prayse and honour and glorie at the appearing of Iesus Christ.

The fourth obiection and answere concerning prayer.

Nowe I come to answere a fourth obiection of yours. That you cannot pray. What, can you not pray at all? can yee neuer pray? Yes, you thanke GOD for his mercie, you can pray sometimes, but neither so often, nor so zealously as you desire, and as your need enforceth you.

Cold prayer better then no prayer.

Somtimes you pray, but verie coldlie and with verie little or no feeling. Sometime you pray more earnestlie, and for all that, you finde small comfort. And sometimes though you doe what you can, you cannot pray for your life. This is as I knowe by some wofull experience, a verie iust and true complaint: yet I remember when I demanded whether you could pray at anie time, you coulde not denie but you could pray sometime, and I am perswaded with good feeling and sweete comfort to your soule. Where vpon I proue once againe to your conscience, that

you

you haue a true faith vnto saluation, because prayer is an vndoubted, and plaine fruite of a liuelie faith, accompanied with euerlasting saluation: for whosoeuer calleth vppon the Name of the Lorde, shall be saued. Rom,10,13

Prayer is not a common gift, common to all, but a speciall gift, proper onlie to the Elect, as faith and repentance. The Apostle saieth, All men haue not fayth, 2.Thessalonians,3,2. so saie I, all men haue not the gift to praie. A wicked man cannot praie, because hee cannot beleeue, for prayer is a most excellent fruite of faith.

Praver no cómon but a special gift giuen to the Elect.

The vngodlie haue not this gift in truth, or in anie good measure, howsoeuer they haue manie other excellent gifts of wisedome, counsel, & learning, yet they want this, which the Prophet doth plainlie auouch, saying of them, that they call not vpon God; as though he should say, they doe manie other thinges, but they do not this, and no maruell, for indeede they cannot, because they want that Spirite which should teach them to praie, for the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and praieth in vs, yea this same spirit of sanctificatiō which hath wrought a gracious mea-

sure of Faith and Repentaunce in your heart, hath taught you also to pray, and to take so great delight therein, that you are glad when you can praie your selfe, or can be pertaker with others when they pray.

Prayer is not a common gyft.

The godly cannot alwayes pray as they would.

But you say, some times you cannot praie at all, and therefore you doubt your selfe very much. If you could pray when you would, and as you would (beare with my plainnesse, for I speake from the feeling of mine own hart) you would be proude, you would thinke it were but a gift of nature, in your owne power, and no gift of GOD: so should God loose his glorie, so should you some forget the right vse of a notable blessing, and forget also to be thankfull. Nowe you haue it but seldome, or not so often as you would your selfe, you know from whom you receiue it, and when you haue it, you vse it with more reuerence, and make more account of it, you take more ioy in it: and when you want it, you groane to GOD for it the more earnestlie.

The want of many blessings & graces is verie needefull & profitable.

It is verie needfull, and much for your profite, that the Lorde would excuse the best of his Seruaunts with the want of manie blessings and graces both for their bodies

bodies and ſoules.

It is good ſome-times to be ſick, that we may knowe how good a thing it is to enioy the benefit of health. It is good ſome times to be hungerbitten, that our meate may be the more ſauourie, that we may be the more thankfull for our foode, that wee may receiue and vſe it more reuerentlie, and the more willinglie relieue ſuch as ſtand in neede. 1 To bee ſicke. 2 Hungerbitten.

It is good for vs ſome nights to bee abridged of our naturall ſleepe, that wee may knowe thereby, that it is the Lorde who giues reſt vnto his beloued. It is verie meete wee ſhoulde ſome times bee troubled in conſcience, ẏ wee may knowe howe precious a bleſſing that is aboue all others, to enioy the peace of conſcience, and to labour aboue all thinges to attaine to it, and to maintaine the ſame. It is good for vs ſomtimes to be cleane to ſeek howe to praie, that when we can praie, wee may bee the more humble, reuerent, and thankfull. 3 To want ſleepe. Pſal. 127. 2. 4 To haue a troubled conſcience. Peace of cõſcience a precious bleſsing.

But if you like to ſtand vpon this point to vrge the ſame againſt your ſelfe, I will as in the ſight of God, to his glorie, and mine owne ſhame, confeſſe the truth

vnto you, as it is with mee in this thing. I haue more cause a thousande folde, to doubt my selfe heerein then you haue, by reason of the great calling which the Lord hath laide vppon mee, beeing a Minister and Teacher of the Worde. Therefore the Lorde bee mercifull vnto mee a wretched sinner. For my wicked euill heart is so narrowe and barren in Prayer, that manie times I cannot pray at all. And this falls out not onelie in my priuate meditations betweene GOD and mine owne soule, but in my dailie prayers with my household, wherein I haue beene forced for the most part to vse, and that almost word for word, a short praier, which I haue set downe in a short Catechisme, for the help and furtherance of all such as are vnder my charge.

This hath been in former time, now throgh Gods grace it is otherwise, yet performed in great weaknes, & with manie wants, besides some speciall exercise another way sufficient to abate the pride of my hart, & keep me vnder.

And if vppon some speciall occasion offered, I endeuour my selfe to praie otherwise, it is such poore, drie, naked, and sillie stuffe, both for wordes and matter, that after I haue prated, I am a great while maruailouslie tormented in conscience. And I should be vtterlie ashamed, that you or anie other should come within the hearing of my babling Prayers. And assuredlie, were it not that I feele some

some more gracious assistance, from the Lorde in those prayers, which are offered vp in my publike Ministerie, I coulde haue small assurance of GODS louing fauour towardes mee. This I confesse according to the trueth, that you may know you are no more alone in this point than in the former, and to intreate you to praie for mee, following the good aduise of the holie Apostle Saint James, who counselleth vs, to confesse our sinnes one to another, and to pray for one another. James, 5. 16.

But alas, saie you, howe shoulde I pray for you, when I can not praie for my selfe?

If you can not praie in sette wordes, and in fine order, can you not therefore praie at all? Can you not sigh and grone inwardlie, in the true feeling of your soul, as one that is so greatlie oppressed with griefe, that hee hath not a tongue to vtter that which hee hath within his minde. If you can sigh and grone after this manner, bee of good comfort. For you haue learned long since, from some of your faithfull teachers, who haue manie times soundlie taught this point from the word of God, and that of purpose for the reliefe of weak

True prayer is not a sette order of fine wordes.

conſciences, that you praie verie effectuallie.

Your ſighes are Prayers, which the Spirit from whom they proceed, vnderſtandeth right well, yea although there is not ſo much as anie one worde vttered to expreſſe them.

Words are for our vnderſtanding, that we may thereby know one anothers meaning: but the holie Spirite which is our Comforter, Schoolemaiſter, and ſearcheth the deepe things of GOD, knowes our meaning and thoughts before wee ſpeake, yea although wee ſpeake not at all.

For as the Prophet Dauid ſaith, Hee knowes our thoughts long before. And the Apoſtle ſaith, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelfe maketh requeſts for vs with ſighes, which cannot be expreſſed.

Pſal. 139. 2.

The ſighes of the godly are acceptable prayers.

These ſighes breaking out violently from the conſciences of the godlie, are Prayers, and loude cries, acceptable to the Lorde, and pearcing deepelie into his eares, as appeares in Exodus, chapter 14. verſe, 15. Where the Lord demaundeth of Moſes why he cryed ſo vnto him,

where

whereas the wordes of the Text make no mention of anie one worde hee spake or vttered.

I praie you tell mee this one thing, if the childe of your owne bodie, whom you loue deerelie, and which is vnto you as your owne soule, shall be sicke, and being full of paine, shall moane himselfe vnto you, tell you howe sicke hee is, where his paine doth hold him, and shal entreate you euen as you loue him, to do what you can to ease him, will you not doe it both willinglie and readilie? yea, wil you not doe whatsoeuer you are able euerie kinde of way for the ease of your deare darling? But if his paine shall increase and growe so great, that it takes awaie his speech, so as he is not able to speake a word, but to fetch deepe sighes, and to moane himselfe vnto you by most grieuous groanes, will not these groanes pearce your hart more deepelie, and cause the bowels of compassion to yerne in you more strongly, to straine your selfe euen to the vttermost of all your power to afforde him as much comfort as is possible, both by your selfe and by others? shall the groning of your childe worke great pittie in you, & shal not the mightie groanes of your poore sicke soule, A similie.

The Lord exceedeth al mē in goones & compassion, and therfore will hear & help you readily.

soule, mooue the Lord your GOD to greater compassion.

If in such a case you will be so readie to heare and helpe, know you for certaintie, the Lord will be more readie to heare and helpe, whensoeuer you shal in the anguish of your soule groane vnto him. For looke howe farre hee exceedes you and all other in goodnesse: so farre also dooth hee excéede you and all other in mercie and compassion.

Psal. 51, 17. The sighes of the spirite are to be regarded.

Beside all this, there is no Sacrifice more acceptable in the sight of GOD, then the sighes and groanes of a troubled minde. For so saith the Prophet. The Sacrifices of GOD are a contrite spirit, a contrite and broken hart O God, thou wilt not despise. Therefore make as good account of the groanes and sighes of the spirit, as of anie prayer you can make, euen in the best wordes you can deuise.

Ezechias could not pray but chatter.

Esay, 38, 14.

And for a farewell of this matter, remember that the godlie and good king Ezechias, coulde not in smoothe and fine wordes powre out his prayers before the Lorde in his great sicknesse, but chatter like a Swallowe or a Crane, as he confesseth of himselfe. Cōsider also that the poore Publican, beeing ashamed of himselfe,

selfe, by reason of his sinnes, and fearing to lift vp his eyes towardes heauen, coulde not deliuer his minde at large, in fitte, and choise words, but with much paine, at the last hee breakes forth after this manner, O GOD bee mercifull to mee a sinner. Neuertheless our Sauiour Christ giueth sentence on his side, that hee went home more iustified, then the proude Pharisie, who had both words and winde at will.

The publican prayed feruentlie, but said litle.

Luke, 18,9, 10,&c.

Your fift Obiection dooth thus offer it selfe, That you cannot leaue sinne. And that which dooth more trouble you, you cannot leaue those sinnes, which you haue vowed to leaue, but you fall againe into them.

The fift obiection and aunswere of leauing sin.

First you reason thus against your selfe, that you cannot leaue sinne. No maruaile, for although you bee one of GODS Saintes, and haue receiued the spirite of sanctification in measure, to fight the Lords battels against sinne, and hell: yet are you no Angell in this world, so as you can altogether cease to sinne, because you carrie, and shall carrie vnto your graue, a bodie, and soule subiect to sin. Therefore you must fight this battell euen

Sin cleaues too fast to our nature to part with it in hast.

euen so long as you haue breath and life.

No perfect conquest ouer sin vntill death.

This enemie of yours is so strong, that he will neuer be fullie ouer-come, vntill you haue ouermaistred him by death. And then you shall haue a full and perfect conquest ouer him and all your enemies. In the meane time, plucke vp a good hart, gird you fast with all your Christian armour, put on your complete harnesse, and euerie part thereof, as you finde it set downe in the first chapter of the Epistle written to the Ephesians, take your weapon in one hand, I meane the sworde of the spirite, and your buckler in the other, that is to say, the shield of fayth.

Christian courage & armour.

Ephe, 6, 13, 14, &c.

Lay about you lustilie, with all the strength and cunning you haue, Yea, be strong in the Lorde, and in the power of his might. And feare not the issue, although you latch and catch many a sore blowe, no though you be foiled & wounded, because you haue a valiant Captaine Christ Iesus your Sauiour, who hath alreadie himselfe gotten the victorie for you, and who will not shrinke one foote frō you, vntill such time as you also haue gotten the victorie. For in all these thinges we are more then Conquerours, through him that loued vs. Romans, chapter 8, verse. 37.

Be careful to fight Christ his battell, & feare not the issue.

And

And that you may haue the more courage to fight this Field without fainting, vnderstand thus much, that all the faithfull doe ioyne hands with you to fight out this battell.

All the faithful doe fight one and the same battell.

The holie Apostle Saint Paule, had receiued a great measure of sanctification aboue manie thousands of GODS Children: yet coulde not hee get the full masterie ouer sinne, but that full sore against his will to his harts griefe hee fell into it. Therefore with sorrow of soule, hee complaines in the seauenth Chapter to the Romanes and the nineteenth verse, That the good which hee would, hee did not, but the euill which hee would not, that did hee.

And that it may be well vnderstoode, that this was not onelie a sharp hote skirmishe, for a short fit, but a sette battell to continue to the end of his life, you may reade howe after sundrie and diuers grieuous complaints of his owne weakenes, and of the strength of sinne, as a man that is wearie of his own life, for no cause but this onelie, that hee coulde not leaue sinne, hee breakes out into these wordes of great passion, O wretched man that I am, vvho shall deliuer mee from the bodie

Paul fought a bloodie fielde with sinne.

Rom. 7.24.

bodie of this death?

Paule could not leaue sin as he desired

In which speech he dooth bewray two thinges. First, that hee coulde not leaue sinning, although it was his whole studie, and the onelie thing among manie, which hee most earnestlie desired. Therfore hee calls himselfe a wretched man, because hee carries about a bodie of sinne and death.

Secondlie, that hee had as longing a desire to cease from sinne, as any man could haue. And therefore he asketh this question: VVho shall deliuer mee?

The godly would faine leaue sinne, & so would you with all your hart.

Nowe tell me I beseech you, is it not thus with you? Woulde you not faine leaue sinne if you could, and that with all your heart, are you not wearie of it, and sore grieued for it? Must it not needes be thus, because you complaine so greatlie, you can not leaue sinne?

Esay.5.18.

The godly sin not willinglie as the wicked.

You sinne indeede, but not willinglie, nor of set purpose: you drawe not sinne vnto you with cart ropes, as the wicked doe, but you are violentlie drawne by the furie and violence of sinne. You hunt not after iniquitie, to pursue and followe after it, with the intisements thereof. But sinne hunts & pursues you, till you haue lost both winde, and strength, and so it may

may bee, you are manie times taken prisoner.

In which case you are no more to bee blamed, then a Souldiour, who in battell is full sore against his will taken prisoner of his enemie, which thing is most manifest to your own conscience, because whē you are taken, & you perceiue it, you behaue your selfe as a man, which is fallen into his enemies hand. For your hart is grieued, and your soule wonderfullie troubled, your sleep departeth from you, you can eate no meate that doth you good, you take no plesure in any worldly thing, there is no mirth in you, but you are all heauie and sad. If you be in companie, where you are prouoked to be merry, you laugh but for company: for it is but from the teeth forward.

To be short, so long as you are holden captiue of any sinne, you are wearie of your life. Therefore all your studie is howe you may breake off the fetters of sinne, and be deliuered, whereto you aplie all your wit, power, cunning, and skill. The godly studie how to breake off the fetters of sin.

And if through the great goodnesse of GOD, you get anie aduauntage to escape, there was neuer any fowle more glad

gladde of a faire day, or byrde that hath broken out of the Fowlers Nette, more ioyfull then you are of ſo happie deliuerance.

And when you are deliuered, you are euer afterwardes more carefull a great deale that you fall not againe into your enemies hand.

The wicked doe trade in ſinne.

Againe, you make not a trade of ſinne, to followe it dailie and hourelie as the workers of iniquitie, who followe it as carefullie and continuallie as anie man followes his occupation whereby hee muſt liue. But the trade which you followe, and the way wherein you walk with delight, is the continuall meditation of the Law of GOD, with an earneſt deſire to practiſe it in your whole conuerſation.

Mat. 7. 23.

Pſal. 1. 2. 3.

Coloſſ. 3. 2.

Your minde and affections are not ſet vppon the earth, but vppon heauen, and vpon thoſe thinges which may bring you to heauen. Therefore in the true acknowledgement of GODS great mercie towards you, you may with peace to your owne ſoule, ſaie with the Apoſtle Saint Paule in the ſeauenth Chapter to the Romans and the fiue and twentieth verſe, I thanke God through our Lorde Ieſus

It is better with you then you think for, & therefore be thankful and cheere vp your hart in the Lord.

Iesus Christ, because in my minde I serue the Lawe of God, although in the flesh, that is in that part, which is vnregenerate, I serue the law of sinne.

Touching that other poynt, namelie that you fal often and againe into that sin, which you haue vowed neuer to commit againe; for as much as ꝑ same is against your will through great infirmitie, and not of anie set purpose, (although I wish you in any wise to bee as carefull as may bee therein, and to vse all good and holie meanes of watching ouer your affections, and auoyding all those occasions, whereby you may be drawne forwarde into any the least sin, by praying, fasting, and such like holie exercises, whereby you may be better strengthened against all assaults of sinne:) yet would I not haue you to discourage your selfe too much with the cõsideration thereof.

It is no wõder in thys corruption to sin often in the same sinne.

All good meanes must be vsed against euery sinne.

For thys you knowe, that one which walketh in a slipperie waie or vpon Ice, may against his will, yea though hee looke neuer so well to his feete, not onelie take the first, but the second, and the third fall, yea manie falls, notwithstanding that he thinketh to set his foote maruelous sure.

Consider wisely, and applie with reuerence.

Abraham

Abraham fell more then once into one ſin.

Abraham, although hee was the Father of the faythfull, and for his godlineſſe highlie commended in the Scripture: yet though great weakeneſſe, lyed firſt in Egypt to Pharao, in denying Sarah to be his wife, Geneſis the twelfth chapter and thirteenth verſe.

Theſe examples are to comfort ſuch as wold leaue ſin, & not to encourage any to liue in ſin.

Againe, hee fell into the ſelfe ſame ſin vnto Abimelech, the King of Gerar, Geneſis the twentie chapter, & ſecond verſe. Sarah alſo gaue her conſent both times, and was partaker of the ſame ſinne.

Iſaac theyr ſonne, vpon the like occaſion, ſo readilie coyned a lye, as if his Father and Mother had not only by practiſe, but by precept taught him to lie. I know both what I ſay, and to whom I ſpeake, for as theſe examples and ſuch like, may not, nor ought not, to make vs bolde to runne headlong, or to continue with delight in anie ſinne great or ſmall: (for that woe vnto vs) ſo they ſerue to comfort vs, that wee ſtande not ouermuch amazed at our dailie ſlippes in ſinne.

The 6. obiection concerning hardneſſe of hart.

Nowe followeth a firſt obiection concerning hardneſſe of hart, That you can not profite by the Worde preached, and ther-

therefore thinke it were as good or better not to heare at all, as to heare to no purpose, and profit. For hardnesse of heart, which is the first branch of this obiection, I answer that it is a principall part of the corruption of the olde man, which cleaueth fast vnto our nature, and is one of our mortall enemies, which will haunt vs vnto the death. For our faith shall be exercised therewithall, as long as we shal liue in this world. Therefore our best remedy is to arme our selues with the armour of proofe before rehearsed, and to buckle with this aduersarie, whose edge and courage, by little and little shall be abated. And for your encouragement this I say, that flesh and blood hath not opened your eyes to see this to be a sinne, neither touched your heart, with a misliking thereof: for then you might long agoe haue founde out this and many other sinnes, when they raigned in you more strongly, and carried you headlong, without any resistance or misliking into much euill, to commit sin with great greedines. But then you could finde no fault at all with your selfe, nay you thought your self in as good case as was possible. And no meruaile, because you were blinded through the darknes of your owne vnder-

Hardnes of heart will hang vpō vs and haunt vs to the death.

Looke well to your armour.

Blesse Gods name, that now you see and greeue for, that sin which in former times you neither saw nor greeued for.

Your case all one with the Apostle Paul

Ro.7,9. &c. Act.2,20,9. ſtanding, and reaſon, ſo as you could iudge no colours.

Now, through Gods goodnes, for the welfare of your ſoule, your eyes which were blind, are opened to ſée thoſe things which you neuer ſaw before, and your hart is touched with a wonderfull miſliking of that which before you loued. Yea indeede you muſt néeds confeſſe, you ſée and féele your hardnes of hart, but you cannot help nor amend it. No, but the Lord both can and will helpe to amend whatſoeuer is amiſſe in his time. In the meane time doe what you can, Be patient, tarry the Lords leaſure, waite vpon him, and he ſhal comfort thine heart.

Giue God leaue and he wil help that which you can not.

Pſal.27,14.

Where you ſay, you cannot profit by the word of God preached, that is alſo a generall complaint of all ſuch as are moſt carefull to profit. But your owne words doe proue againſt your ſelfe, that you doe profite. For if you profited not, howe comes it to paſſe that you haue found out this fault, that you cannot profit. It is not the manner of ſuch as doe not receaue profit by the word preached, to find fault, but to pleaſe and flatter themſelues moſt, when they profit leaſt. Therefore this is a great argument and ſound proofe of your profiting, in that you can thus blame your

A generall cõplaint of the beſt.

your selfe, that you doe not profit. And it pleaseth the Lorde thus to exercise you and the rest of his beloued ones, with the feeling hereof, not to discourage you, but that this may bee as a whetstone to sharpen your stomacke, to heare with greater conscience, and as a spurre to make you more eagar vpon the worde, when it is preached, that the oftner you heare, you may desire more and more, to profit by hearing.

The complaint of not profiting is very profitable, because it makes you carefull to profit.

But where as in the ende, you throwe downe this logge in your owne way, that it were good, not to heare at all, I am to giue you speciall warning, as you tender the saluation of your owne soule, to take heede howe you giue consent to that temptation, in the least thought of your heart, for it is a strong enchauntment of Sathan, to bewitch you withall, and a choise baite to catch your soule in euerlasting destruction. Hee knowes this as well as anie man can tell him, that the word preached is the onelie most principall meanes, which God hath ordained to strengthen you against the whole batterie and force of all his temptations. Hee knowes also that from thence you dailie gather courage against him. Whether it be thus or not, I ap-

As you loue your soule take heed of this temptation.

The deuill himselfhates preaching (more then holy water) because it ouerthroweth his kingdome.

peale to your conscience. And if you haue found this powerfull worke in your owne soule, then so often as hee shall thrust in this temptation, say vnto him auoyde Sathan, for thou labourest to murther my precious soule, by withdrawing me from the meanes of my saluation.

Math. 4, 10.

The deuils craft in reasoning.

But howe doth hee vrge this poynt against you, and with what reasons. First because you doe not feele profit presentlie. Secondly, because you doe not profit so much as you should. Now marke I beseech you the deuils craft in reasoning. First you feele no profit by the word presently so soone as you heare it preached: therefore you doe not profit at all. You feele not profit presently, therefore you shall neuer feele profit. You shall see this cunning layd open to your vnderstanding in a familiar example, after this maner.

The deuils cunning laid wide open by sensible reasons.

A sicke man hath Phisicke giuen him to helpe his sicknes: Hee is not helped presentlie so soone as hee hath taken it: Therefore he shall neuer haue help. The husbandman dooth sowe his seede, and casts it into the ground, that it may growe and bring foorth fruite: But it growes not so soone as it is sowne: Therefore it will not growe at anie time, neyther

shall

shall hee euer reape any croppe of his seede.

Againe, he reasoneth thus against you, you profit not so much as you should, or not alwayes alike: Therefore you profit not at all. This is as if one should reason after this fashion. One acre of corne some yeare brings forth fiue, ten, twenty, or a hundred fold: But it doth not so euerie yeare: Therefore it brings forth nothing at all. Some yeares an occupier gaines a hundred pounde by his trade: Hee gaines not so much euery yeare: Therefore hee gaines nothing. Thus the deuill reasoneth with you, therefore be your selfe iudge of his manner of reasoning, and the Lord in mercy giue you wisedome, in all thinges to take heede of his wilinesse, that you be not by him any way abused.

The seuenth and last obiection is, concerning euill thoughts, which arise in the minde, where with I know, some are not a little troubled, for comfort of whose weake consciences, which are many times ouer-much greeued by the consideration thereof: I aunswere thus from the Prophet Jeremie, the seauentéenth Chapter and ninth verse: That the heart is deceitfull, The last obiection concerning euill thoughts. Ierem. 17, 9.

ceitfull, and vvicked aboue all thinges, vvho can knowe it? By which place (if my iudgement doe not much abuse mee) this one lesson may be rightlie and kindlie gathered, that when the best men and women haue done their best, to their best power, they shall neuer attaine, or come to the perfect, and full knowledge of all the corruption, and filthinesse which is there hatched, and harboured: because it is like vnto a bottomlesse pitte, which can neuer be drawne drie. Heere vpon I reason thus. If we shall neuer in the whole course of our life, come to the through and full knowledge of all that venomous poison, which is deepe rooted in the dungeon of our vnderstanding: howe then shall it euer be possible for vs, to attaine to the perfect reformation of so manie disorders, as are there to be found. Againe the Lord himselfe saith, That all the imaginations of the thoughts of mans heart, be euill, onelie euill, and that continuallie. If all be euill by nature before we be regenerate, and borne a newe by a second birth of the spirit, and worde, and that continuallie: then no meruaile if some be euill, and that continuallie after our regeneration. Because wee be renewed but in part, And wee haue so put on the

The heart is like a bottomlesse pit which can neuer bee drawne dry.

Gene.6,5.

Ephe.4,24.

newe man, vvhich after God is created in true holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, as that wee ſhall neuer cleane, and altogether put off the olde man vvith all his deceaueable luſts, vntill we put off this fleſh, and that by death.

In this one point ſtandeth a great part of our Chriſtian warfare, wherein wee are at all ſœles and ſeaſons, to ſtand vpon our gard, and to watch with all diligence, in withſtanding the euill affections and thoughts of our hearts, which as Peter ſaith, fight againſt our ſoules. For theſe be ſuch ſpitefull enemies, as lodge themſelues cloſe euen in the cloſet of our hart, they eate and drinke with vs, they ſlœpe and wake with vs, they ride and goe with vs, they goe out and in with vs: to bee ſhort, when our other enemies, the world, and the deuill doe graunt vs ſome time of truce, theſe will affoord vs no peace, becauſe they ſit ſo nœre vs, as that euermore they are at hand ready to aſſault vs, both before & behind, and on euerie ſide. Therfore we are to the vttermoſt of our power, to arme our ſelues ſtronglie againſt them by faith, by prayer, and all other good and holie meanes. That we may daillie gette ground of them, and through Gods grace aller-

This is our task to our dying day, to fight againſt our affections, which are our deadly foes.

1, Pet. 2, 11,

Our vnruly and lordly luſts do yaw vs continually.

Faith and prayer are our beſt armour.

ouer-maister them in some good measure, to our euerlasting comfort. The rather because the wise man sayeth. Hee that is slowe to anger, is better then a mightie man, and hee that ruleth his owne minde, is better than he that winneth a Citty.

Pro. 16, 32.

A wofull cõplaint against euill thoughts.

But euen now while we are speaking of euill thoughts, there comes in one, with a most lamentable complaint, saying, O sir, I am so troubled this way, as I thinke there was neuer anie childe of God so grieuously troubled. For I haue such wicked and blasphemous thoughts, as make my flesh to tremble, and all my bones to shake, yea they are such as they almost driue mee to dispaire, when I thinke vppon them. For they strike not at men, but at God himselfe. They exalt themselues against the persons of the Trinitie, and some of them against the blessed, and holie Scriptures. What they be in particular, I am ashamed to speake. If you bee ashamed so much as to name them, then I perceaue you take no great liking of them, neither doe you meane to entertaine them. And therefore I answer in fewe words, they shall not be able to hurt you. If I regard wickednes in my heart (saith the Prophet) God will not heare mee. He doth not

Psal, 66, 18.

not say, if there be anie wickednes at all in my hart, or anie thought of wickednes. (For who can say, My heart is cleane,) but if I regard wickednes, that is, if I delight in it, or meane to nourish it within mee, then I am sure the Lord will not heare my prayer, nor shewe mee anie fauour. But as if the Prophet should say, and as I am sure you doe say, that is far from me, to take delight in anie such vngodlie, and blasphemous thoughts, yea so farre, as I am not more greeued for anie thing, then for this, that anie such thought should come into my minde. And therefore he and you, and you as well as hee, may be vndoubtedly perswaded, the Lorde will neither reiect you, nor your prayers, which in Christ his name, you shall offer vp vnto him.

It is one thing to haue euill thoughts, & another, to like of them and delight in them.

And whereas you thinke it so strange, to haue so euill thoughts, to arise in your minde, and that you are perswaded, there are no moe so tempted beside your seife, I answer vpon mine owne knowledge, you are therein greatlie deceaued. There bee manie who are euen as much troubled with the same, or with as euill. And this I dare auouch, that the most godlie are not free, but are subiect vnto most vngodlie thoughts, although they

The most godly are not free from euill thoughts.

yeeld

Rom.3, 10, & pſal.51,5. yéeld not vnto them. Firſt, becauſe the as well as others, doe carrie with them, curſed corrupt nature, which is the ro from whence all euill ſpringeth. Secon lie, becauſe they haue ſuch an enemie, will not ſpare to tempt them to the gre teſt euill, yea, to this, then the which the can be none greater, namely, to curſe god as the iuſt & holie man Iob was tempte But as that good man withſtood the tem tation, ſo do they fight againſt euerie eu motion, and are preſerued.

Iob tempted to curſe god not in his hart, but w his mouth. Iob, 1,7.

Yet there is one thing more concer ning euill thoughts, which is, that yo cannot be rid of them, but that euer, a anone they come into your minde. T this I anſwere, that the ſoner you chec them, and the more ſtronglie you reſi them, the ſoner a great deale, ſhall yo be rid of them. Firſt, you muſt reſiſt

1, Pet 2, 11.

Iam. 4,7. for, Reſiſt the deuill, and he will flie fro you. And heere marke, that this reſi ſtance, muſt be by the word, and by pra er. Secondlie, you muſt reſiſt eagerlie, and ſpeedilie. And therefore as Dau haſted to fight againſt Goliah, and wit courage flang a ſtone ſo hard, that it ſtac faſt in the forehead of the vncircumciſe Philiſtim: ſo muſt you ſpeedilie ſtrike a euerie ſuch thought, ſo ſone as you ſha

The ready way to be rid of euill thoughts, is to reſiſt the. 1, Sam. 7, 48.

per

for an affected conscience.

perceaue the same to put out his head, and once to arise in your minde. And as Iesus Christ, being tempted of the deuill to fall downe and worship him, at the same instant gaue him his answere, saying, auoyde Sathan: so must you giue them a present answere, and send them packing to the deuill of hell, from whence they come, and whither you are in all hast to returne them. If when you haue done what you can, you finde your selfe too weake for them, and that they be too hard a great deale for you, then turne your Captaine Christ Iesus to them, who hath so fullie conquered for you, as that howsoeuer they shall assault you continuallie, & manie times foile you, yet shall they neuer get the full victorie ouer you, but you in your Captaine shall be more then a conqueror ouer them, and all the rest of your deadlie enemies, for Christ was deliuered to death for our sinnes, and rose againe for our iustification. To him therfore be glorie for euer and euer. Amen.

Matth. 4, 10.

Rom. 8, 37.

Rom. 4, 25.

Thus you haue the pledge of my good will towards you & manie others, which I haue not done to exclude anie grace or blessing of comfort which you may receiue in greater measure, from your own godlie

Pastor

Paſtor (moſt carefull of your eſtate) b
that you may more highlie account of
excellent graces of God in him. And tha
whatſoeuer is wanting in this my
poore Treatiſe, may by
him be more fullie
ſupplied.

FINIS.